

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 SCCT-01 /057 W

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O 061919Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3001

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: MONTONEROS ATTACK AGAINST MILITARY

1. THE MONTONEROS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY, THROUGH NEWSPAPERS, FOR A THREE-STAGE ASSAULT OPERATION AGAINST THE MILITARY YESTERDAY (OCT 5) IN FORMOSA PROVINCE. THE THREE-STAGE ATTACK, INCLUDING A SKYJACKING, LEFT AT LEAST 26 EXTREMISTS AND SECURITY OFFICIALS DEAD. THE ASSAULT WAS SIMILAR TO THAT IN TRELEW AUG 22, 1972 TO RELEASE SEVERAL PRISONERS FROM THE MILITARY BASE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET MADE A STATEMENT ON THE ATTACK.

2. THE MONTONERO ATTACK WAS THEIR FIRST MAJOR ASSAULT AGAINST THE MILITARY AND THE LARGEST SUCH OPERATION ANY EXTREMIST GROUP HAS YET CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE TERRORISTS SIMULTANEOUSLY SKYJACKED A AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS DOMESTIC FLIGHT ENROUTE TO CORRIENTES, TOOK CONTROL OF THE PACU AIRPORT IN FORMOSA, AND BEGAN THE ASSAULT AGAINST THE 29TH REGIMENT ARMY BASE WHERE SEVERAL TERRORIST PRISONERS ARE HELD.

3. THE ATTACK AGAINST THE BASE MET HEAVY RESISTANCE AND FAILED. SECURITY FORCES THEN CHASED THE ATTACKERS INTO THE SURROUNDING WOODED AREA. BORDER GUARDS FREED  
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THE AIRPORT, AND ONLY ABOUT 18 TERRORISTS ESCAPED IN THE

AIRPLANE TO A PRIVATE LANDING STRIP OF AN ESTANCIA IN SANTA FE PROVINCE. CARS WERE WAITING TO TAKE THE TERRORISTS TO SAFETY FROM THE RAFAELA ESTANCIA (THE CITY, INCIDENTALLY, WHERE INTERIM PRESIDENT ITALO LUDER WAS BORN).

4. THOUGH THE ATTACK WAS THE LARGEST YET AGAINST A MILITARY GARRISON, IT DOES NOT, IN ITSELF, INDICATE ANY CHANGE OF TACTICS ON THE PART OF THE TERRORISTS. THEY HAVE IN THE PAST ATTACKED OTHER MILITARY BASES. IF FOLLOWED QUICKLY BY OTHER MAJOR ATTACKS, HOWEVER, IT WILL INDICATE AN INCREASED PACE AND LEVEL OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. CLEARLY, THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO PROVOKE THE MILITARY TO SEIZE POWER--WHICH THE TERRORISTS BELIEVE WOULD BRING ABOUT CONDITIONS IN WHICH THEY COULD WIN POPULAR SUPPORT AND EVENTUALLY PERHAPS OVERTHROW THE GOVT.

5. THE MILITARY, HOWEVER, IS WELL AWARE OF WHAT THE TERRORISTS ARE UP TO, AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE PROVOKED TO IRRATIONAL ACTS AS A RESULT OF THE FORMOSA ATTACK. IT MIGHT, HOWEVER, PUSH FOR A STRENGTHENING AND FAST APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED DEFENSE COUNCIL (SEE SEPTTEL).  
HILL

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